



IN REPLY REFER TO:  
A3823(YOSE)

## United States Department of the Interior

### NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Yosemite National Park  
P.O. Box 577  
Yosemite National Park, California 95389

April 25, 2003

Dear Yosemite Friends:

On behalf of the National Park Service, I am pleased to present the *South Fork Merced River Bridge Replacement Environmental Assessment*. The South Fork Bridge is located in Yosemite National Park on the South Fork Merced Wild and Scenic River in Wawona and conveys foot and vehicle traffic across the river via Wawona Road (Highway 41). The National Park Service proposes to remove the existing South Fork Bridge, replace it with a single-span structure, and remove the temporary Bailey bridge that has been carrying traffic since 1998. The South Fork Bridge, constructed in 1931, is no longer structurally sound or safe for use and has been condemned. The demolition and replacement of the bridge would increase visitor safety; protect the river and park utility lines attached to the bridge from impacts associated with the potential collapse of the condemned bridge; and remove the current in-channel bridge piers, which act as impediments to the free flow of the South Fork.

Public and agency participation has been a key element throughout this process. In September 2002, Yosemite National Park initiated the public scoping process to solicit ideas and concerns from affected federal agencies, state and local governments, American Indian groups, and interested organizations and individuals. The planning team reviewed public comments and has incorporated appropriate responses in this *South Fork Merced River Bridge Replacement Environmental Assessment*.

There will be a 30-day comment period on the environmental assessment. If the environmental assessment and a Finding of No Significant Impact are approved, new bridge construction is expected to occur during the 2003-2004 construction season, during low-flow periods of the river.

We appreciate your interest in this planning effort and welcome your participation. Comments must be submitted in writing by May 29, 2003 and may be sent to:

Mail: Superintendent, Yosemite National Park  
ATTN: South Fork Merced River Bridge Replacement Project  
PO Box 577  
Yosemite, CA 95389  
Fax: 209/379-1294  
E-mail: YOSE\_planning@nps.gov

Written comments will also be accepted at the National Park Service planning open house held on May 21, 2003 (2:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M.) at the Yosemite Valley Visitor Center East Auditorium. Planning teams will be on hand to answer questions and provide more information regarding the South Fork Merced River Bridge Replacement Project, as well as several other Yosemite National Park planning efforts. This document can be reviewed online at [www.nps.gov/yose/planning](http://www.nps.gov/yose/planning). To request a printed copy, refer to the information directly above or call 209/379-1365.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Tollefson  
Superintendent